

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 052012
ORIGIN EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 EA-10 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00
L-03 FRB-03 OMB-01 ITC-01 SP-02 USIA-06 AGRE-00
AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00
OIC-02 SIL-01 STR-07 TRSE-00 CEA-01 SS-15 SIG-03
/128 R

DRAFTED BY IO.IEP:DSCHWARTZ:EB/IFD/OMA:BGCROWE
APPROVED BY EB:RHORMATS
TREASURY:O/ASIA:ADDRESS
TREASURY:O/ASIA:AREIFFEL
EB/IFD:CMEISSNER

-----071081 011015Z /15

R 282350Z FEB 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 STATE 052012

USMISSION GENEVA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 052012

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN

SUBJECT: UNCTAD TDB MINISTERIAL AND DEBT

REF: A-0451

1. SUMMARY: THE UNCTAD TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD (TDB) MINISTERIAL SESSION WILL TAKE PLACE MARCH 6-10 IN GENEVA. LDC DEBT WILL BE THE MAJOR AGENDA ITEM. WE HOPE THE DISCUSSIONS AT THE MINISTERIAL WILL BE CONSTRUCTIVE, AND LOOK FORWARD TO A FRANK AND HONEST EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WHICH WILL FACILITATE A BETTER INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEBT ISSUE. WE WOULD LIKE POSTS TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE WITH APPROPRIATE FINANCE AND FOREIGN MINISTRIES, AND WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WITH TECHNICAL COMPETENCE IN OTHER MINISTRIES (SUCH AS MINISTRIES OF PLANNING OR TRADE) WHO MAY DEAL IN SUCH MATTERS DRAWING ON INFORMATION CONTAINED IN PARAS 5-10 BELOW AND REPAIR. YOUR OBJECTS SHOULD BE TO EXPRESS OUR VIEWS ON THE NATURE OF THE DEBT PROBLEM ON A TECHNICAL RATHER THAN POLITICAL LEVEL, AND URGE OFFICIALS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE AT THE MINISTERIAL WITH AN OPEN MIND SO AS TO CREATE THE TYPE OF ATMOSPHERE CONDUCIVE TO ACHIEVING AN INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS ON "DEBT". WE ARE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT THE LDCS NOT APPROACH THE MEETING WITH HIGH EXPECTANCY OF MAJOR POLICY CHANGES ON THE PART OF

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 STATE 052012

THE DCS ON THE DEBT ISSUE AND ANOTHER OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE TO DAMPEN EXPECTATIONS OF DRAMATIC POLICY SHIFTS. PLEASE REPORT RESULTS OF YOUR DISCUSSIONS TO DEPARTMENT, INFO US MISSION GENEVA.

2. DEVELOPING COUNTRY DEBT IS THE MAJOR AGENDA ITEM FOR THE MARCH 6-10 TDB MINISTERIAL. THE ONLY OTHER AGENDA TOPIC RELATES TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, INCLUDING DEBT, OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LLDCS). THIS WILL BE THE FIRST TDB MINISTERIAL AND WAS AUTHORIZED AT UNCTAD IV. IT WAS ALSO AGREED AT UNCTAD IV THAT DEBT WOULD BE ONE OF THE AGENDA ITEMS. THE FACT THAT THE MEETING HAS BECOME FOCUSED ALMOST ENTIRELY ON DEBT REFLECTS GROUP OF 77 (THE LDC CAUCUS) PRESSURE FOR A "DEBT" MINISTERIAL" WHICH THEY BELIEVE WOULD LEAD TO SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPED COUNTRY CONCESSIONS AND AN INCREASE IN RESOURCE TRANSFERS. IT ALSO REFLECTS THE INABILITY OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO AGREE ON ADDITIONAL SUBJECT MATTERS WHICH WOULD HAVE BROADENED THE AGENDA FOCUS.

3. AS THE AGENDA NOW READS, THE MINISTERS ARE ASKED TO:
(1) REVIEW ACTIONS TAKEN ON DEBT SINCE UNCTAD IV. THIS INCLUDES CREDITOR COUNTRY RESPONSES TO INDIVIDUAL REQUESTS FOR DEBT RELIEF, AS WELL AS INITIATIVES PROPOSED AT CIEC;
(2) CONSIDER TWO DEBT PROPOSALS TABLED BY THE GROUP OF 77. ONE REQUESTS IMMEDIATE GENERALIZED DEBT RELIEF FOR ALL

INTERESTED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, WHILE THE OTHER PROPOSES NEW INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH GUIDELINES WHICH WOULD ESTABLISH THE ACHIEVEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT TARGETS AS THE OVERRIDING FACTOR IN DEBT RESCHEDULINGS; AND (3) REVIEW A BROAD RANGE OF ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE UNCTAD IV TO BENEFIT THE LLDCS.

4. THE MINISTERIAL HAS BEEN PRECEDED BY TWO SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETINGS (SEPTEMBER AND JANUARY) AND TWO DEBT EXPERTS MEETINGS (JULY AND DECEMBER) ALL OF WHICH
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 STATE 052012

FOCUSED ON THE SUBJECT OF LDC DEBT. THROUGHOUT THESE MEETINGS IT WAS CLEAR THAT THERE IS A BROAD AND SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND THE GROUP OF 77 BOTH AS TO THE FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF THE DEBT PROBLEM AND ON APPROPRIATE SOLUTIONS.

5. THE VIEWS OF THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES ARE CONTAINED IN THE REFERENCED AIRGRAM (A-0451). IN OUR VIEW THE RISE IN INDEBTEDNESS DOES NOT IN ITSELF POSE THE THREAT OF INCREASED SERVICING PROBLEMS. THE NOMINAL INCREASES IN DEBT THAT HAVE OCCURED APPEAR FAR LESS DRAMATIC WHEN ONE ALLOWS BOTH FOR THE GROWTH OF REAL OUTPUT AND TRADE THAT HAS TAKEN

PLACE IN THE WORLD ECONOMY AND FOR THE INFLATION THAT HAS OCCURRED. MOREOVER, LDC DEBT IS DISTRIBUTED BROADLY IN LINE WITH INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY DEBT-SERVICING CAPACITY. MOST OF THE DEBT ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE POORER COUNTRIES HAS, FOR EXAMPLE, BEEN HIGHLY CONCESSIONAL IN NATURE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE BULK OF PRIVATE DEBT IS CONCENTRATED IN A DOZEN OR SO RAPIDLY GROWING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH RELATIVELY HIGH PER CAPITA INCOMES AND DIVERSIFIED ECONOMIES. WHILE THE DEBT PROBLEM OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES DOES NOT APPEAR EITHER GENERAL OR UNMANAGEABLE, THE CURRENT SITUATION REINFORCES STRONGLY THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING A HEALTHY INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT. EFFORTS TO EXPAND AGGREGATE GLOBAL DEMAND, TO MAINTAIN DEVELOPING COUNTRY ACCESS TO INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY MARKETS, AND THE ASSURANCE OF ADEQUATE OFFICIAL FINANCING TO ENCOURAGE ADJUSTMENT ARE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT. FOR THE POOREST COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH LIMITED EXPORT GROWTH POTENTIAL, INCREASED DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ON HIGHLY CONCESSIONAL TERMS IS REQUIRED. THESE ARE THE KEY FACTORS IN TACKLING THE CURRENT PROBLEM OF INTERNATIONAL PAYMENTS IMBALANCES.
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 05 STATE 052012

WITH THESE ELEMENTS, IT IS REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT ACUTE

DEBT PROBLEMS OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS WILL BE CONFINED TO RELATIVELY FEW COUNTRIES AND THAT THEY CAN BE HANDLED IN A MANNER SIMILAR TO THE MULTILATERAL APPROACH WHICH WE HAVE USED IN THE PAST.

6. IT IS ON THE ABOVE ANALYTICAL BASIS, THAT THE US AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY MADE A PROPOSAL AT CIEC WHICH LAID OUT GUIDELINES FOR CREDITOR CLUB OPERATIONS TO INSURE EQUITABLE AND EFFICIENT TREATMENT FOR COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING SEVERE DEBT PROBLEMS. (THIS PROPOSAL IS ATTACHED IN THE REFERENCED AIRGRAM.) THE PROPOSAL ALSO SUGGESTED PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING STRUCTURAL BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROBLEMS OF WHICH DEBT IS AN ELEMENT, WHICH UNDULY IMPINGE ON DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS. WE BELIEVE THIS PROPOSAL WAS CONSTRUCTIVE AND THAT IT CONSTITUTED A REALISTIC RESPONSE TO THE CURRENT DEBT SITUATION OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. WE THEREFORE REGRET THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS NOT ACCEPTED BY THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN MAY, 1977.

7. MANY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES VIEW THE DEBT ISSUE FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE. AS A RESULT OF THE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES WHICH THEY CONFRONT, SOME LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES VIEW DEBT RELIEF AS A MEANS OF SUPPLEMENTING WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE INADEQUATE FLOWS OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE. THEY BELIEVE THAT DEBT POLICIES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF RESOURCE TRANSFER GOALS AND THAT DEBT RELIEF SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED AS AN APPROPRIATE MEANS OF REACHING

INTERNATIONALLY AGREED DEVELOPMENT TARGETS. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THESE COUNTRIES, GENERALIZED DEBT RELIEF WOULD BE AN IDEAL FORM OF ASSISTANCE, SINCE IT IS UNCONDITIONAL, UNTIED AND FAST DISBURSING.

8. WHILE THE GROUP OF 77 IS CALLING FOR ACTION ON BOTH
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 06 STATE 052012

OFFICIAL DEBTS AND COMMERCIAL DEBTS, ONLY A FEW COUNTRIES (SUCH AS JAMAICA) ARE INTERESTED IN RELIEF ON COMMERCIAL DEBT. HIGHER INCOME COUNTRIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND ASIA, WHILE FORMALLY SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPING COUNTRY CONSENSUS, HAVE CLEARLY DISASSOCIATED THEMSELVES FROM DEMANDS FOR GENERALIZED DEBT RELIEF. NORTH/SOUTH "DEBT" DISCUSSIONS HAVE THUS BECOME FOCUSED ON RELIEF FOR THE OFFICIAL CONCESSIONAL DEBT HELD BY LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES. MOST OF THE PRESSURE FOR SUCH RELIEF IS COMING FROM THE FEW LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES (INDIA, PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH) WHO WOULD BENEFIT MOST FROM CURRENT GROUP-77 PROPOSALS FOR ACROSS THE BOARD DEBT RELIEF. FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES, WHO WOULD RECEIVE VERY LITTLE BENEFIT, THE ISSUE HAS DEVELOPED A POLITICAL IMPORTANCE BEYOND ITS ECONOMIC

SIGNIFICANCE. WHILE WE DO NOT WISH TO OPENLY UNDERMINE G-77 SOLIDARITY, WE DO WANT TO ENCOURAGE HOST GOVERNMENTS TO TAKE THEIR OWN INTERESTS AND SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES INTO ACCOUNT WHEN EVALUATING THE VARIOUS PROPOSALS. FOR OUR PART THE US TAKES THE ISSUE OF INDEBTEDNESS SERIOUSLY. HOWEVER, WE CANNOT ACCEPT THE GROUP 77 PROPOSALS FOR GENERALIZED DEBT RELIEF FOR THE MOST-SERIOUSLY AFFECTED (MSA) AND LLDC COUNTRIES. THERE ARE GOOD REASONS FOR OPPOSITION:

-- GENERALIZED DEBT RELIEF IS A VERY INEFFICIENT WAY OF ALLOCATING RESOURCE TRANSFERS FOR DEVELOPMENT.

-- COUNTRIES' CURRENT NEEDS FOR ASSISTANCE DO NOT NECESSARILY CORRESPOND TO THE AMOUNTS OF DEBT THEY HAVE ACCUMULATED IN THE PAST.

-- LOW-INCOME DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, WHICH THE G-77

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 07 STATE 052012

CLAIM SHOULD BE THE MAJOR BENEFICIARIES OF NEW RESOURCE TRANSFERS, GENERALLY HAVE LITTLE DEBT. TABLE 6 ON PAGE 30 OF A-0451 LISTS THE AMOUNT OF 1975 ODA DEBT SERVICE PAID BY POORER COUNTRIES TO DAC CREDITORS. THIS DATA SHOWS ROUGHLY HOW THE BENEFITS OF GENERALIZED ODA DEBT RELIEF WOULD BE ALLOCATED AMONG THE POORER COUNTRIES PURSUANT TO THE GROUP 77 PROPOSALS. THE LARGEST BENEFICIARY

(ACCOUNTING FOR MORE THAN ONE-HALF OF THE 1975 ODA DEBT SERVICE) IS INDIA, WHICH IS CURRENTLY IN A STRONG BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SITUATION. IN CONTRAST, THE 29 LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES HAVE VERY LITTLE IN THE WAY OF ODA DEBT SERVICE.

-- THE GRANTING OF IMMEDIATE AND GENERALIZED DEBT RELIEF WOULD NOT CONSTITUTE ADDITIONAL AID AND WOULD THEREFORE DISADVANTAGE MOST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES BY LEAVING THEM TO COMPETE FOR A SMALLER AID PIE. THIS OCCURS BECAUSE FOR MOST DONORS, DEBT RELIEF AND DIRECT ASSISTANCE COME FROM THE SAME OVERALL APPROPRIATION.

-- GENERALIZED DEBT RELIEF COULD CAUSE DIFFICULTIES FOR THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH CURRENTLY HAVE HOPES OF ESTABLISHING CREDITWORTHINESS ADEQUATE TO BORROW IN THE PRIVATE CAPITAL MARKETS.

WE ARE CONCERNED, MOREOVER, THAT THE GROUP OF 77'S INSISTENCE IN HIGHLIGHTING THE POLITICALLY CONTENTIOUS AND

FALSE ISSUE OF POOR COUNTRY DEBT, DISTRACTS ATTENTION FROM THE VERY REAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES (QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF AID, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, BASIC HUMAN NEEDS OF THE LLDCS ETC.) FACING THESE COUNTRIES.

10. THE US WANTS VERY MUCH TO HAVE A CONSTRUCTIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 08 STATE 052012

MINISTERIAL MEETING ON DEBT. IN THIS CONTEXT, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THE GROUP OF 77 NOT HAVE UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS OF WHAT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED AT THE MINISTERIAL. IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY UNFORTUNATE IF MINISTERS VIEWED THE MEETING PRIMARILY AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SECURE IMMEDIATE RESOURCE TRANSFERS, RATHER THAN AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS SUBSTANTIVELY THE CURRENT DEBT SITUATION WITH THE INTENT OF ACHIEVING A PRODUCTIVE INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS ON THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION.

11. IN YOUR DISCUSSIONS WITH APPROPRIATE HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, YOU SHOULD STRESS THAT THE USG WELCOMES THE MINISTERIAL AND IS LOOKING FORWARD TO A SUBSTANTIVE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. YOU SHOULD ALSO REQUEST APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS TO GIVE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE US/EC PROPOSAL TABLED AT CIEC, STATING THAT THE PROPOSAL GOES FAR IN ASSISTING LDC WITH CURRENT AND POTENTIAL DEBT PROBLEMS AND SHOULD BE LOOKED AT POSITIVELY.

12. HOST COUNTRY OFFICIALS SHOULD BE INFORMED THAT UNDER-SECRETARY RICHARD COOPER WILL HEAD THE USG DELEGATION TO THE

MINISTERIAL. (MOST OTHER GROUP B COUNTRIES ARE ALSO PLANNING TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES BELOW THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL.) PLEASE ADVISE WHO WILL REPRESENT HOST GOVERNMENTS.

13. FOR ARA POSTS: ALL BUT THREE ARA COUNTRIES (HAITI, PARAGUAY AND GRENADA) ARE MEMBERS OF THE 115 MEMBER TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD. JAMAICA AND VENEZUELA HAVE ACTIVELY SUPPORTED THE G-77 POSITIONS. OTHER MAJOR ARA COUNTRIES (I.E., BRAZIL, ARGENTINA, CHILE AND MEXICO) HAVE SOUGHT IN PRIVATE TO MODERATE THE G-77 POSITIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 09 STATE 052012

BUT HAVE ADOPTED A "LOW-PROFILE" IN PUBLIC ON DEBT ISSUE. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF ADDITIONAL ARA COUNTRIES IN THE MINISTERIAL WOULD, WE BELIEVE, SERVE TO MODERATE THE G-77 POSITION ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE MOST COUNTRIES WILL CONTINUE TO FAVOR A "LOW-PROFILE" RATHER THAN RISK OPEN SPLIT

AMONG THE G-77. VANCE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 sep 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, DEBTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE052012
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: IO.IEP:DSCHWARTZ:EB/IFD/OMA:BGCROWE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D780093-0657
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197802120/baaafbyw.tel
Line Count: 329
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 63a0b5cf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A-0451
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3476292
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UNCTAD TDB MINISTERIAL AND DEBT
TAGS: EFIN, PORG, UNCTAD, TDB
To: ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS NEW DELHI MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/63a0b5cf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014